

Memorandum

To: Justice Information Board Members and Designees
From: Brian LeDuc, JIN Program Director
Date: 12/12/2003
Re: Travel Policy for Board Activity

The 2003 Boards and Commissions Report for the State (<http://www.ofm.wa.gov/reports/boards/w362-393.pdf> p.7) classifies the Integrated Justice Information Board ("The Board") as a Class One entity. RCW 43.03.220 defines this as a

part-time board, commission, council, committee, or other similar group which is established by the executive, legislative, or judicial branch to participate in state government and which functions primarily in an advisory, coordinating, or planning capacity...

The law states that "no money beyond the customary reimbursement or allowance for expenses may be paid by or through the state to members of Class one groups for attendance at meetings." (RCW 43.03.220 (2)).

Provisions for payment of travel expenses are found in RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060, which state that the director of the Office of Financial Management (OFM) shall prescribe reasonable allowances to cover mileage for travel to meetings, as well as reasonable and necessary subsistence and lodging expenses. OFM's regulations are found in Chapter 10 of the State Administrative and Accounting Manual. (<http://www.ofm.wa.gov/policy/10.htm>), the relevant part of which states that Agency heads and their designees are responsible for:

- directing travel and approving reimbursement to ensure that any travel costs incurred are work-related and necessary;
- establishing written internal policies and procedures which cover the items required in this chapter; and
- to ensure travelers are not treated differently under like travel circumstances.¹

Current Policy

The current policy, based on practice prior to the formation of the Board, is that some Board members are reimbursed for meeting and other travel expenses by the Criminal Justice Grants Coordinator at OFM, in accordance with the regulations set out above. There are, however, no written policies or procedures authorizing this course of action, and the Board has not explicitly delegated this authority. This matter is complicated somewhat by the fact that compensation for travel expenses has historically come from Byrne² and other grants (such as the National Governor's Association), the stewardship of which have been assigned to OFM. In addition, the Byrne Grant has also historically funded attendance by the Criminal Justice Grants Coordinator and local JIN representatives at the SEARCH

¹ The Manual defines "agency" as "Every state agency, office, board, commission, department, state institution, or state institution of higher education, which includes all state universities, regional universities, The Evergreen State College, and community and technical colleges", which would appear to include the Justice Information Board."

² 5% of the federal Byrne Grant is allocated to OFM for improvement of criminal history records. While OFM controls this money, it would seem that tangible projects are a better use of these funds, and that the Board should look to alternative sources of funding for Board-related travel.

conference. Although the required documentation has not yet been filed with CTED, OFM's intention is to continue this practice at next year's conference in March.³

While it is appropriate that OFM continue to oversee the processing of travel expenses for Board members and designees, the policy should be made explicit and the source of the funds should be approved by the Board. Alternatively, the Program Office could assume these responsibilities. In addition to the Byrne Grant, potential sources of funding for travel expenses this year include the Program Office Budget and the \$25,000 National Governor's Association Grant, which explicitly lists travel to meetings as an eligible use of the funds.

In addition to setting up a procedure for the reimbursement of travel expenses for meetings, the Board should institute procedures for the approval or delegate authority for any additional travel for which reimbursement from these funds is sought.

Over the last five months, travel expenses for two Board members have amounted to approximately \$1,000, an average of \$100 per member of monthly expenses. If this figure is expanded to include all seven out-of-town Board members (the remainder of which will not require overnight accommodations as they are located in King or Pierce County, the expected cost of reimbursement for all Board members is approximately \$4-500 per month.

Recommendations

That the Board authorize the Program Office to reimburse members and designees for travel to Board meetings, consistent with the policies specified in RCW 43.03.050, 43.03.060 and the State Administrative and Accounting Manual (Proposed language for amendment to bylaws below);

That the Program Office follow the same procedures for reimbursement as are currently employed by DIS for reimbursement of travel expenses for the Information Services Board.

That the Board recommend the use of National Governor's Association Grant funds for meeting-related travel expenses this fiscal year or assign stewardship of these funds to the Program Director, with travel expenses to be paid out of the general budget;

That all non-meeting travel expenses related to Board activity require advance authorization of the Co-Chairs;

That a report of travel-related expenses be submitted to the Board at the end of each calendar year by the Program Director.

That the Board recommend to OFM that Byrne Grant funds not be used for travel expenses;

Proposed amendment to Bylaws

Members of the Board, or their appointed designees, shall be reimbursed for travel expenses incurred in the performance of their duties in accordance with RCW [43.03.050](#) and [43.03.060](#).⁴

³ OFM has indicated that funding for the Program Director to attend this conference is not available.

⁴ Based on the language in RCW 43.101.070, Criminal Justice Training Commission and RCW 43.105.032, Information services board.